28: Spiro--18
116, 622, 184

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians
Ifalik

"The chiefs also act as the depositories of the cultural traditions. Myths and legends are almost unknown to the people, but they are transmitted by the chiefs to their successors. This is also true of religious and other cultural values. If one questions a native about any aspect of religion, morality, social and cultural values, he will tell you what he knows, and they say, that for a complete and thorough account you should speak to the chiefs, because they are the ones who really know these things.

Finally, the chiefs are the moral guides of the culture. Ifaluk religion and ethics are not connected as they are in western religion, so that the chiefs, rather than the priest-shaman are charged with the perpetuation of the mores."

28: Spiro--24 [3] (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 623, 537, 184 Ifalik

"The speeches of the chiefs shows a definite pattern of delivery. They talk for a certain time, and then lapse into complete silence for an extended period, the only sound being the swishing of the coconut fibre that the men are making into rope. This interval of silence, theoretically, gives the people an opportunity to express themselves, or to take issue with the chiefs if they desire. I say, theoretically, because at none of the meetings we attended did any one make use of this opportunity."

"As I have pointed out above, informality characterizes the relationship between chiefs and people, there being no overt symbol that might distinguish one from the other to a stranger. The chiefs assume the same economic obligations that the other men have. They participate in communal clean-ups, fishing expeditions, building repairs, and all other work, working with the other men, with no special dispensations of any kind.

Socially, they receive no special recognitions. They are addressed by name, as any other man. When sitting in the canoe-house they occupy no special seat of honor, nor is their arrival or departure signaled by special courtesy. In conversation their opinions are given no greater weight than those of a commoner.' Nor are they treated with any special respect or deference. For example, Dr. Burrows administered anti-dysentery shots to five men when we first arrived, for a period of five days, one of the men being Wolptau. On some days, the men would come at least an hour after the arrival of Wolptau (he was on time, they were late), and he waited till the others came; he not complaining, they not apologizing for having kept him waiting.

Nor do the chiefs attempt to keep themselves aloof from the people. This cameraderie is carried to the extent of Maroligar, the second ranking chief, playing cards with the young men and small boys, and being kidded for making a foolish move.

But despite this informality, when they function ex cathedra, their word is law, and

obedience is immediate. When they sit in the canoe-house adjacent to the fanap, conducting a meeting, no one will enter uninvited, or else will enter through the rear, so as not to intrude upon them in an obtrusive fashion. Furthermore, the entire plot of ground, Atelu, referred to above, is the property of the chiefs, and symolizes the chiefly office (or the government, to use an abstraction foreign to native modes of thinking), so that the village path that traverses the island skirts this section, and unless a person is going to Atelu itself, he will take this circumscribed route. Furthermore, when a person passes Atelu, he pays his respect by bending his entire trunk his hands clasped behind his back. This motor behavior becomes entirely automatic, as it is already inculcated even in the very young children.

The chiefs, also, receive special seats of honor at all religious ceremonies, and no ceremony begins in their absence. Furthermore, mourning at the death of a chief [25] is more extensive than for that of a commoner. On the other hand, as far as I could determine, no special rite commemorates a chief's taking office. His successor merely assumes his responsibilities, and begins to function with no ceremony of coronation."

28: Spiro--45-46
116, 772, 184

(1947-48) 1949

Woleaians-1-5
Ifalik

"Cosmogomy and cosmology: The following account was received from all five chiefs in a number of sessions. It is unknown or only vaguely known by the people, who would invariably respond to my questions with a confession of ignorance. As we shall observe in another connection, this ignorance of the people reflects their indifference to cosmological problems, since this knowledge is not taboo, and the chiefs, who are the repositories of this information have no compunctions about imparting it.

Like many other cultures, the concept of a creatio ex nihilo is completely absent in Ifaluk. There is no creator, the world having always existed. Nor were the chiefs concerned about the problem of first causes. When asked how the world came into being, they replied that they did not know; it was always there. At some time in the distant past--how far back they could not say, since they have no system of time notation--there appeared a primordial mother, Legobub. Again, her appearance is unexplained. Legobub had three children, whose creation is unaccounted for. That is, it is not known whether she fashioned them out of some material, or whether she conceived and gave birth to them. In any event, it is clear that she did not have a male consort, and however she created her children, she did so without male assistance. Having performed this function, she plays no further role, either in the mythology, theology, or functional religion of Ifaluk.

Legobub's three children were her son, Aluilap, whom she ordained as ruler of the sky; Solal, another son, ordained as ruler of the nether world; and Autran, a daughter,

who was later to create the people of the Caroline Islands. (1).

The natives have no term which corresponds to our words, universe, or cosmos, which would unite in one term the oceans, land, heavens etc. These are but so many discrete entities in their minds, and the concept for earth, as opposed to the heavens. There is land (falu), and there is ocean (tat), but again, there is no uniting of these two discrete entities into one conceptual term. Their term bwanifalu, which literally means, all the lands, is their most inclusive geomorphic frame of reference and is a descriptive, rather than a conceptual term. It means what it literally says, and refers to the fact that they recognise other lands besides their own. Bereft of maps, however, it is obvious that their knowledge of other lands is mere recognition, of their existence. Before contact, their knowledge of the world was limited to the Carolines, and this knowledge was more than mere recognition of the existence of other islands. It included a well defined spatial orientation, which enabled them to locate islands as distant as four hundred miles. With contact their quantitative information has been increased, but not their conceptual knowledge. Europe, which is their generic term for all the 'civilised' countries they have heard of, exists outside of the Carolines, but they haven't the slightest idea where.

"1. [See following sheet for footnote 1.]"

28: Spiro--45-46 (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians-3
116, 772, 184 Ifalik

"1. [Footnote 1, pp. 45-46] Arogeligar, the priest-doctor, with whom I discussed these problems at great length, gave me an entirely different version. Here we have a problem, in what Herskovits has called, the question of 'ethnographic truth', in a most extreme form. For we have here not one informant differing from another, thus indicating variability, but we have the two only sources in the entire culture differing fundamentally --the political and the religious, both of whom profess to competence in these matters. Tom realised this difficulty, too, and solved it by saying that the chief's account was the authentic, whilst the other was spurious. In any event, the ignorance of the [46] people, the disagreement between chiefs and priest-shaman, and the lack of assurance with which the chiefs approached these matters--all indicate the unimportance of these matters and the people's lack of concern with them.

Arogeligar's creation story is as follows: At one time there was neither land nor water, nor sky. The sky was made by four brothers (sic)--Aluelap, Solan, Autran (Autran is a woman in the chiefs' account) and Metha (absent in the chiefs' account). Arogeligar did not know how these brothers came into being. After making the sky, Aluelap made the land and the oceans, first creating the high islands, (including 'Europe', by which the natives understand a vague 'island', including Japan, Germany, Spain, America, and other countries they may have heard of) and then the low islands. After creating the islands, he then created people to inhabit them.

28: Spiro--45-46 (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians-4
116, 772, 184 Ifalik

The brothers then decided that Aluelap would remain in the sky, Solan would reside under the oceans, Autran would inhabit the atmosphere, and Metha would be in the speech of the people, for Metha is the native term for 'what.'"

The Carolines are called Iligalifalu, literally, 'the lands that are here', and as has already been indicated, (2) the natives are well oriented spatially within this area."

"2. Falu means land, but it is synonymous with island, since the only land the natives know is an island. My attempt to describe a land mass as large as the United States, evoked expresssions of incredibility and amazement. Taroman, one of the chiefs, finally concluded that Ifaluk was as a grain of sand, compared to America, which actually isn't far from wrong."

28: Spiro--58-59 (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians-1-2
116, 753, 776, 184, 789 Ifalik

"It is believed that babies are especially vulnerable to the alus, so that they are liable to their attacks even in the daylight. Hence, a baby taken from its home will be covered with a cloth, so that an alus should not see it.

It is obvious from this discussion that we are dealing here with a profoundly significant belief in Ifaluk culture and personality alike. For no matter how conceptualized every person, without exception, lives in great fear of the alus, one ever expressed any skepticism concerning either their existence or their power. [sic] Now this lack of skepticism cannot be attributed solely to conditioning factors, or to the culture pattern, or the determinism of the collective representations, from which the savage cannot extricate himself, to employ the jargon of three alternative schools of thought. For if these factors were primarily responsible for the firmness of this belief, then the same lack of skepticism should prevail in the belief in the benevolent alus, the alusemar, and such is not the case, for here, the natives are entirely pragmatic in their approach, their belief being contingent upon the objective evidence of the aluseman's power. The only objective documentation I have for this assertion comes from Tom. Now it might be argued that his higher degree of acculturation accounts for his skepticism. But this is untenable for this acculturation did not induce any skepticism as regards the alusengau, and furthermore, despite his acculturation, Tom accepts without qualification the entire pattern of natives beliefs, practices, and attitudes.

Tom, in discussing the alusemar with me, remarked that, 'If god talk lie, people throw away.' That is should the alusemar promise to restore a man's health and not succeed he is discarded in favor of another.

On another occasion, we were waiting for the diagnosis and prognosis of the illness Paluelimar, the third ranking chief, by Arogeligar. After it was given, Tom said to me, 'I don't know; maybe that god talk true, maybe talk lie.'

Another point worth recording at this point is the natives' refusal to assign alus causality to events that are amenable to naturalistic interpretation. (18)"

"18. Malinowski's point made long ago (Science, Magic and Religion) that magical or supernatural techniques are employed by natives only in situations which are unpredictable, and which they cannot control applies in full on Ifaluk. Only where [59] naturalistic interpretations are unknown, or where risks are great, are supernatural techniques used, at biological crises, ocean voyages, tec. The paucity of magic on Ifaluk is in part explainable, therefore, by a relatively predicitable environment, so that not even in gardening, for example, are magical techniques used."

28: Spiro--113
116, 858, 184

(1947-48) 1949

Wóleaians
Ifalik

"Socialization involves not only the introjection of the values of the culture, it means also learning to participate in the institutionalized activities of the culture. From the moment the child is taken from the confines of his home, there is no cultural activity he may not witness; and, indeed, he is taken to them all. Whether it be a political meeting, a religious ceremony, a dance, an economic activity, the child, from infancy on, is a witness to the proceedings, for he is carried by his parents, when an infant, and walks himself, when he can do so. In short, there is no institutionalized facet of his culture that, in principle, is barred to the child. He begins to observe adults behavior, therefore, much before he begins to participate in the activities himself. This means, that in many instances, all that is lacking for his participation is the skill or strength, not the knowledge or information. His culture, therefore, is not a strange mystery from which he is excluded. He is never made to feel, except in the case of sex, that there are adult activities that, for inexplicable reasons, he may not share. He may and does share them, but full participation must await greater maturity. And when he does begin to participate actively in his culture, it is not as a sudden transition from one discrete category to another, a precipitate change from child to adult, an abandonment of one and an entry into a new and entirely different world. His cultural, as well as biological growth, is continuous, for his cultural participation increases concommittently with his biological maturation."

28: Spiro--114-115 (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 883, 462, 226, 184 Ifalik

"The young men are accepted members of the society, doing any activity which their experience permits them to do. All toddy gathering is the job of the young man of the household. Like the men, they make rope. They participate in all communal fishing, and often fish on their own intitiative, particularly fishing in the lagoon. [115] In all construction work the young men are most conspicuous, for though they do not plan or direct the activity, they do most of the heavy work. If a roof needs to be relaid, it is the young men who are on the roof, and the older men hand them the material from the ground. In the making of canoes, the young men and boys have their share of the work, though it is usually the less-skilled work. One of the older young men might make his own canoe, and though he is assisted by an older man, the responsibility is his.

The young men also take social or economic responsibility on their own initiative. If the canoes are outside the canoe-houses, and it begins to rain, they will themselves remove the canoes from the rain without being told to do so by the older men. The point that is being stressed here is that the young men feel themselves integral members of the culture, and assume responsibility for the perpetuation of the group and its culture."